

Montgomery County Commission on Child Care



Annual Report

2017-2018

Montgomery County, Maryland

Table of Contents

Memo from the Chair	1
Vision, Mission & Purpose Meeting Information	3
Membership Commission Year 2017-2018	4
Membership Commission Year 2018-2019	5
Recommendations	6
Commission Activities 2017-2018	8
Commission Priorities 2018-2019	9



COMMISSION ON CHILD CARE

November 1, 2018

TO: The Honorable Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
The Honorable Hans Riemer, President, Montgomery County Council

FR: Greg Smith, Chair, Commission on Child Care

SUBJECT: The Commission on Child Care 2017-18 Annual Report

The Montgomery County Commission on Child Care is pleased to submit its 2017-2018 Annual Report.

The Commission's role is to provide the County with advice on issues related to child care by bringing together a variety of stakeholders and experts in the child care and early childhood education field including: County parents, business representatives, child care providers, Montgomery County Public School staff, Montgomery College staff, and representatives from the County and State agencies that impact child care. As a group, our collective knowledge and expertise allows the Commission to discuss, analyze and problem solve various child care issues and provide a comprehensive perspective for feedback, improvements, and solutions to County officials and citizens.

This has been a challenging time for the Commission. As we have noted in our reports for many years, the cost of child care continues to increase and many families in the County cannot afford the child care they need so that families can work while their children are in quality environments. The Commission has been recommending that the County needs to significantly increase funding for the Working Parents Assistance Program (WPA) and to consolidate management of child care in public space (CCIPS) into one entity. Unfortunately, the citizens who volunteer many hours and have an expressed interest and expertise around child care issues have seen our input largely ignored. Our expertise positions us to be primary advisors to the County, and the County could leverage our guidance as additional input is also being sought from other organizations, such as Montgomery Moving Forward and The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (the Kirwan Commission).

As such our top priority for this year is to establish and maintain effective lines of communication with the County Executive's Office and with each Councilmember's office. We are hopeful that the Executive and Council will look to us for guidance on child care and early education issues. The Commission would like to start the year by meeting with each one of you so that we can discuss where we are and how we might be able to make improvements. Child care is such a crucial issue and with the recent increase in Federal and State funding for child care subsidies, this is a critical opportunity for significant improvements may be made. Ensuring all families in the County can obtain the quality child care they need is our top priority and we are sure you share this priority as well.

The Commission on Child Care has the most comprehensive investment and expertise in child care policy and programming, as we are made up of providers, parents and businesses that intersect with the child care community. We are hopeful for children and families in Montgomery County, and believe that with the new leadership that has demonstrated such stalwart support for early childhood, that we will be able to develop a collaborative and productive relationship with the incoming County Executive and Council.

The Commission would like to thank you for taking the time to review this report and we look forward to serving as your top resource on child care issues.

The Commission on Child Care

Vision

Access to quality, affordable child care for all Montgomery County families.

Mission

To advise the County Executive and County Council on the development, implementation, and effectiveness of government policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for quality, affordable, and accessible child care.

Purpose

Section 27-62 of the Montgomery County Code provides authority for the Commission on Child Care to “advise the County Executive and County Council on the development of policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for high quality, affordable, and accessible child care.”

Meetings

The full Commission meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Early Childhood Training Center located at 1401 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852. All meetings are open to the public. The full Commission does not meet in December and August.

A significant portion of the Commission’s work is accomplished through the Executive, Programmatic Issues, Public Policy, and Membership Committees. Volunteers from the general public are invited to assist the committees. Committee meetings take place on the third Wednesday of the month at the Early Childhood Training Center located at 1401 Rockville Pike, with the Programmatic Issues Committee and Public Policy Committee meeting concurrently at 7:30 p.m., and the Executive Committee meeting at 5:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Committees do not meet in December and August.

Please call 240-777-1716; TTY 240-777-1009 for more information regarding full Commission and Committee meetings.

Membership

The Commission has 17 voting members and six to eight non-voting members appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Membership includes parents, center and family child care providers, and representatives from the business community, general public, and government agencies with interests in child care. The Commission is supported through staff effort from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.

Commission Year 2017 - 2018 Voting Members

Parent Representatives

Lindsey Allard Agnamba
Hashan Chowdhury
Jessica Kelley
Edward Krauze
Laura Seminario-Thornton

Child Care Representatives

Michelle Belski
Rosalba Bonilla-Acosta
L'Ornya Bowie
Greg Smith

Business and General Public Representatives

Sybil Philip
Greg Stevens
Barbara Warman
Dr. Mayme Williams

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Barbara Andrews, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
William Polman, Montgomery County Community Use of Public Facilities
Pamela Dunn, Montgomery County Planning Board
Carl Eggleston, Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care
Yvonne Iscandari, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Claudia Simmons, Montgomery County Public Schools
Vacant, Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families, Inc.

Staff

Erin Stillwell, Program Manager, Commission on Child Care, Early Childhood Services
Department of Health and Human Services

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Vacant, Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families, Inc.

Staff

Erin Stillwell, Program Manager, Commission on Child Care, Early Childhood Services
Department of Health and Human Services

Recommendation #1

The mission of the Commission on Child Care (CCC) is to advise the County Executive and County Council on the development, implementation, and effectiveness of government policies, programs and services that enhance community support for quality, affordable and accessible child care.

The CCC has worked tirelessly towards the vision of providing access to quality, affordable child care for all Montgomery County families. ***Quality care is critical to supporting children's development, particularly for children ages 0-5.*** The CCC is comprised of dedicated volunteers offering differing and insightful perspectives. The members of the CCC work together and with other organizations in the County committed to early childhood advocacy.

The CCC recommends the following priorities to be taken up by the County Executive and the County Council:

- Reallocate unused Working Parents Assistance (WPA) resources to fund Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) at a full year level of services for child care programs, families and children.
- Re-examine the appointments to the Early Childhood Coordinating Council (ECCC) to ensure that child care leaders and other decision makers are represented (in accordance with DHHS Strategic Plan Goal 5 FY 2017& FY 2018).
- Develop and implement a staged approach to funding elements of the Early Care and Education Strategic Plan.
- Encourage new Montgomery County leadership to spend time in early education programs and centers observing and learning from early childhood educators.
- Review OLO Quality of Care study to determine the value of CUPF (Community Use of Public Facilities) services.



Recommendation #2

Outreach to the community and alignment with other groups who support access to high-quality and affordable child care in Montgomery County.

There are numerous organizations and committees in Montgomery County that focus on the healthy development and well-being of the children and families in Montgomery County. Each of these organizations has a unique mission, focus, and representation and consequently can have differing priorities. Given the historic commitment to diversity in both the residents and elected leadership of Montgomery County, the diversity of early childhood advocacy organization is critical to having a fully informed electorate.

Given its structure and historical knowledge of issues related to child care and early childhood education the Commission on Child Care is in a unique and privileged position to coordinate and align those voices to present an accurate representation of the issues related to child care to the County's elected leaders.

Based on a community forum that the Commission conducted in December 2017 which included representatives from eight different child care organizations, the priorities identified include:

- Public support/investment needs to go to parents through a system of refundable tax credits and child care subsidies
- Universal Pre-K and Pre-K Expansion needs to use a diverse delivery system that is a true partnership with private providers and considers the impact on our entire system of birth to five child care and early education
- Increased opportunities for the child care community to share and receive information about issues impacting the child care community in Montgomery County



Commission Activities 2017-2018

Highlight of the Commission Year

On December 6, 2017, the Commission on Child Care hosted a roundtable event and invited valued members of the early care and education provider community as well as other community stakeholders. The purpose of the roundtable was to discuss topics related to early childhood education, particularly the issue of Universal Pre-K. In addition to facilitating a lively discussion, the event was hosted to assist in coordinating advocacy efforts and ensuring that the unique interests of all early childhood organizations are represented with the same voice.

Two Principal themes emerged from the discussion:

1. Expansion of Pre-K needs to utilize a robust diverse delivery system of private child care and early education programs for children birth to five
2. Education of public officials to assist in acknowledging and understanding the complexities involved in providing quality early care and education programs

Presentations, Testimony and Correspondence

- The vice chair presented the Commission on Child Care Policy Priorities to the HHS Commission of the County Council (October 2017).
- Transmitted a letter to President Durso and members of the Board of Education in support of the revisions of Board Policy IEA, *Framework and Structure of Early Childhood and Elementary Education*. The CCC strongly supported the updates to this document and the recognition that high quality, developmentally appropriate, challenging, and comprehensive early childhood and elementary programs are essential to promoting the intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth in children (February 2018)
- Transmitted a letter to President Riemer and members of the County Council urging further support of the Early Childhood Mental Health Program citing evidence that programs and services that support young children and their families can have a significant impact on improving social and emotional outcomes for young children.



Priorities 2018-2019

Priority 1:

Communicate crucial child care issues to the new leadership of Montgomery County by creating and distributing publications on pertinent child care topics to the County Council and County Executive.



Priority 2:

Work with early childhood groups and stakeholders to learn about and communicate pressing child care needs to the community.

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JoAnn Barnes, Chief
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Language translation and alternative formats of this report are available upon request. For additional information on the Commission, please call or write at the address and telephone numbers listed above.

Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or in the admission or access to its programs or services.